

GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

THANK YOU FOR THAT WARM WELCOME!

AND THANK YOU, CHRISTINE, FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION.

AS MAYOR OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, I'M HONORED TO JOIN ALL OF YOU HERE AT JUNGLE ISLAND FOR THE 2016 SOUTH FLORIDA ECONOMIC SUMMIT.

YOU KNOW, I REALLY LIKE THE TITLE OF TODAY'S SESSION, "FUTURE FORWARD." BECAUSE WITH 2015 BEHIND US, IT'S TIME FOR ALL OF US TO LOOK FORWARD AND TO FOCUS ON WHAT LIES AHEAD IN 2016 FOR OUR COMMUNITY OF 2.6 MILLION AND FOR OUR ECONOMY.

I WAS ASKED TO TALK TO YOU THIS AFTERNOON ABOUT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S ECONOMIC FUTURE, AND I THINK WE HAVE A LOT TO BE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT. AS YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD ME SAY BEFORE, AFTER YEARS OF FISCAL CHALLENGES THAT REQUIRED US TO MAKE PAINFUL SACRIFICES, MIAMI-DADE COUNTY TURNED THE CORNER IN 2015 AND WE AREN'T LOOKING BACK.

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY'S FINANCIAL OUTLOOK IS MUCH BETTER THAN IT WAS APPROXIMATELY FIVE YEARS AGO. THE COUNTY'S FIVE-YEAR BUDGET FORECAST CONTINUES TO BE BALANCED.

WE'VE MADE ADJUSTMENTS SO THAT OUR GOVERNMENT OPERATES MORE EFFICIENTLY, HELD THE LINE ON TAX-RATE INCREASES AND WORKED TO ADDRESS OUR COUNTY'S NEEDS.

WE ARE ONE COUNTY AND THAT'S HOW MY ADMINISTRATION HAS APPROACHED GOVERNING: BY TAKING A GLOBAL APPROACH TO ADDRESSING OUR CHALLENGES AND MAKING MIAMI-DADE A WORLD-CLASS COMMUNITY.

WE ALSO CONTINUE TO WORK TO CREATE A DIVERSIFIED ECONOMIC BASE AND AN EDUCATED POPULATION THAT'S EQUIPPED TO FILL THE JOBS THAT WE'D ALL LIKE TO BRING HERE.

MY ADMINISTRATION HAS ALSO BEEN WORKING TO MAINTAIN THE CONDITIONS THAT WILL HELP TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE MOST AFFECTED AREAS OF OUR COUNTY. OUR OVERALL EMPLOYMENT RATE IS DOWN FROM 12 PERCENT TO 6.25 PERCENT.

AND WE'RE CONTINUING TO MAKE MIAMI-DADE AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE AND DO BUSINESS.

WE'RE IMPROVING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE BY MAKING OUR COUNTY MORE RESILIENT TO FACE CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES.

WE'RE ENHANCING PUBLIC AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

WE'RE ADDING MORE GREEN SPACE AND CULTURAL PROGRAMMING...

AND MY ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES INVESTING IN EDUCATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY.

AND WE CONTINUE TO INVEST IN OUR TWO-LARGEST ECONOMIC ENGINES: PORTMIAMI AND MIA -- WHICH BOTH HAD RECORD-BREAKING YEARS IN TERMS OF CARGO AND PASSENGER TRAFFIC.

BOTTOM LINE: WE'RE MAKING MIAMI-DADE COUNTY BETTER FOR ALL RESIDENTS -- CURRENT AND FUTURE.

GOOD THINGS ARE DEFINITELY HAPPENING HERE, AND I'M SURE THERE WAS LOTS OF DISCUSSION ABOUT OUR IMPROVING ECONOMIC FORECAST DURING THIS MORNING'S PANEL SESSIONS.

SOME OF THOSE GOOD THINGS -- LIKE TOURISM AND TRADE, CONSTRUCTION AND FINANCIAL SERVICES -- HAVE HISTORICALLY BEEN OUR ECONOMIC BREAD-AND-BUTTER. SO, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THOSE INDUSTRIES.

HOWEVER, THERE'S NO QUESTION IN MY MIND THAT WE ALSO NEED TO BE INVESTING IN EDUCATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND TECHNOLOGY - AND OTHER "ONE COMMUNITY ONE GOAL" TARGETED INDUSTRIES. THESE SECTORS NEED TO BE AT THE HEART OF OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS GOING FORWARD.

BECAUSE IF THE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES OF THE PAST HAVE TAUGHT US ANYTHING, IT'S THAT THIS COMMUNITY NEEDS TO DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMIC BASE. WE CAN CONTINUE TO DO THIS BY LOOKING AT FORWARD-THINKING INDUSTRIES THAT WILL GIVE OUR COMMUNITY A COMPETITIVE EDGE IN OUR GLOBAL MARKETPLACE.

WE'LL ALSO NEED TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH OUR STRONG LOCAL EDUCATION PARTNERS TO SUPPLY THE TYPE OF HUMAN CAPITAL WE'LL NEED TO FILL THE JOBS IN THE INDUSTRIES WE WANT TO BRING TO OUR COUNTY.

AND IF WE WANT KEEP OUR GRADUATES HERE AND FINALLY PUT AN END TO THE BRAIN-DRAIN, WE NEED TO HELP CONTINUE TO FOSTER GROWTH IN TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP RIGHT HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY.

THAT'S WHY MY ADMINISTRATION HAS BEEN INVESTING IN EMERGE AMERICAS, VENTURE HIVE AND OTHERS SO THAT OUR TECH AND INNOVATION COMPANIES CAN CONTINUE TO CREATE JOBS AND ESTABLISH DEEPER ROOTS IN OUR COUNTY.

I'M HOPING THAT THE NEXT FACEBOOK, TWITTER OR GOOGLE WILL BE CREATED RIGHT HERE IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!

WHY NOT? IT CAN HAPPEN IF WE ALL -- YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR -- CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER!

IN ADDITION TO MAKING DIRECT INVESTMENTS, WE'RE PARTNERING WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

LIKE THE KNIGHT FOUNDATION, WHICH HAS BEEN LEADING THE CHARGE TO CREATE A CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN OUR COMMUNITY.

THEY'RE DOING GREAT WORK TO FOSTER THE NEXT GENERATION OF CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS HERE IN MIAMI-DADE.

AND, AS LOCAL BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, I HOPE THAT EACH OF YOU WILL ALSO CONSIDER LENDING YOUR SUPPORT AND EXPERTISE TO THIS GROWING SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY.

IT'S REALLY UP TO US, AS LEADERS OF THIS COMMUNITY, TO BUILD A VIABLE NEW ECONOMIC SECTOR THAT WILL COMPLEMENT THE STRONG FOUNDATION WE ALREADY HAVE.

AND THERE'S NO BETTER TIME THAN NOW TO MOVE MIAMI-DADE COUNTY FORWARD, TOGETHER.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME THIS AFTERNOON.

MY THANKS ALSO TO THE NUMEROUS SPONSORS WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE, AND TO OUR

**GRACIOUS HOSTS FROM THE GREATER MIAMI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.**

**MAY GOD BLESS YOU, AND MAY CONTINUE TO
BLESS MIAMI-DADE COUNTY!**

THANK YOU!

